Investment in Agricultural Sector in North Eastern Region

15. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of investment made by Government in Agriculture sector in NER during the last three years;

(b) the total amount of investment proposed to be invested in Agriculture sector in the region during the next three years; and

(c) the effective measures taken to remove regional imbalance in the field of agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) According to information furnished by the Planning Commission State-wise Approved Annual Plan outlays for Agriculture and Allied activities from 1997-98 to 1999-2000 for all the N.E. States including Sikkim are at Annexure *(See Appendix 189, Annexure No. 2).*

(b) Allocations are made on annual basis.

(c) The Ninth Plan envisages regionally differentiated strategies based on Agro-climatic Zones; (a) High Productivity Zone (Northwest and Coastal region), (b) Low Productivity-High Potential Zone, (c) Low Productivity Zone (Central Plateau Region), (d) Ecologically fragile Regions including Himalayan & Desert Areas.

Diversion of Amount for Calamity Relief

16. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the diversion of substantial amount of the Central and voluntary funds for calamity and drought relief works by the State Governments for other purposes;

(b) if so, whether any appraisal has been made by Government to know the extent of diversion of such funds by the State Governments and the purpose for which it is used;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what is the reaction of Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (d) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government concerned to undertake relief measures, in the wake of natural calamities, from the assistance provided to them under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), in accordance with the guidelines issued to them from time to time. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India, in the Report for the year ended March, 1998, has brought out irregularities like diversion of funds, expenditure in excess of norms, misappropriation and embezzlement committed by some States in the disbursal of assistance provided to them under CRF. These have been brought to the notice of the State Government concerned for suitable necessary action, as the expenditure out of CRF is controlled by the respective State Governments.

Improvisation in agricultural implements

17. DR. GOPALRAO VITHALRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the news-item titled "From heart of rural area; Bullock Cart with brakes, amalgamation of plough with Bullet mobike" which appeared in the Indian Express dated the 5th January, 2000; and

(b) if so, what are views of Government on Bullock Cart with brakes and amalgamation of plough with Bullet mobike?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government is aware of the innovations such as Bullock Cart with brakes and amalgamation of plough with Bullet mobike carried out by some entrepreneurs in Gujarat. A project on development of low cost tilting bullock cart has been funded under the "Technopreneur Promotion Programme" jointly operated by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research